

Serial No. 09/406,666

Edited Amendments filed with response dated March 12, 2001

Page 1, the paragraph starting on line 10 and ending on line 16 was amended as follows:

Most nuts, olives, and some fruit are harvested using a tree shaker. These machines usually provide a mechanism for gripping a tree's trunk and shaking the tree thereby causing ripened nuts, olives, or fruit to fall to the ground or onto a collecting apron spread under the tree. Tree shaking devices typically include a pair of arms extending from a vehicle, which can be actuated to grip and vibrate the tree trunk. [The] To protect the tree and to enhance the ability of the arms to grip the tree's trunk, a pad is positioned between each of the arms and the tree.

Page 2, the two paragraphs starting on line 12 and ending on line 24 were amended as follows:

In accordance with the present invention, a pad for use with tree shaking equipment includes a pair of end sections each defining a bore extending therethrough. These bores are each adapted to receive a [post] mounting member that forms part of a shaker head on a tree shaking device, thereby mounting the pads to the shaker head. A web of resilient polymeric material extends between the end sections and during operation, engages the trunk of the tree to be shaken. During operation, the tree is vibrated by the tree shaker causing the nuts or fruit to dislodge from the trees branches and fall to the ground.

To absorb the vibratory loads and any [heated] heat generated from friction during operation of the tree shaker, the web is made from a suitable material, such as polyurethane which is resistant to high temperature degradation, and has a higher modulus of elasticity than the rubbers currently used to make pads for tree shakers.

Page 3, the two paragraphs starting on line 12 and ending on line 26 were amended as follows:

As shown in FIG. 1, a tree shaker pad of the present invention for use with conventional tree shaking machines is generally designated by the reference number 20. The pad 20 includes a pair of generally cylindrical end sections 21, each defining a bore 22 extending axially therethrough. The bores 22 are approximately parallel to one another and are each adapted to releasably receive at least one mounting [post] member that extends from a tree shaker head (not shown) extending from the tree shaking machine. A resilient web 24 extends between the end sections 21 and is made from a suitable material, such as, but not limited to polyurethane.

Still referring to FIG. 1, the web 24 is defined by an approximately planar first surface 26, that engages the trunk of a tree to be shaken, and a concave second surface 28 opposite the first surface. During operation, the concavity of the second surface 28, facilitates the engagement of the pad 20 with differently sized tree trunks by allowing the first surface 26 to readily wrap around, and conform to the shape and size of the different trunks. If required during operation, planer surface 26 of resilient web 24 may also adopted a curvature.

In the Claims

1. (Amended) A pad coupled to a tree shaking apparatus having a mounting member, between the apparatus and the trunk of a tree to be shaken, said pad comprising:

a pair of opposing end sections, each defining a bore extending longitudinally therethrough, and adapted to receive [a] the mounting member coupled to the tree shaker, and

a resilient polymeric web extending between and coupled to said end sections, said web defining a first surface for engaging said tree trunk.

7. (Amended) A pad coupled to a tree shaking apparatus having a mounting member, between the apparatus and the trunk of a tree to be shaken, said pad comprising:

a pair of opposing end sections, each defining a bore extending